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EPISCOPATE CONGRESS 1997 WELCOMES METROPOLITAN SERAFIM



His Eminence, Metropolitan SERAFIM of Germany and Western Europe
with His Grace, Bishop NATHANIEL.

SOLIA

THE
HERALD

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65TH ANNUAL EPISCOPATE CONGRESS

At the conclusion of each Episcopate Congress, the Chancery Staff begins to prepare for the next year's event. Last year, the St. Mary Parish, Cleveland, had offered to host the 1997 Congress; and, it seemed that this important aspect was resolved. Shortly thereafter, however, the St. Mary Parish, Chicago, offered to host the Congress and to cover the cost! The Bishop's office asked the Cleveland Parish its advice: "What to do?" Without hesitation, the response was: "Your Grace! We are ready to serve the Episcopate at any time. The offer from our sister parish is very generous and will bring additional financial benefit to our Diocese. Please accept their generous offer."

The Episcopate Council, in its second constituted year, met consistently and conscientiously in its administrative role of fulfilling the directions of the Congress. Semi-annual audits were held, programs pursued and the operation of the Episcopate Administration and its Departments and Commissions continued the work on a day-to-day basis. As part of the annual Congress, a booklet of reports on all the financial, administrative and departmental activities is prepared, printed and distributed at the time of the Congress.

In addition to the reports on the administrative activity of the Diocesan Chancery and Council, the Congress is also an occasion for socializing and renewing friendships and making new acquaintances. It is a time when the clergy meet one another at least once a year, and the delegates come to understand the needs and activities of other parishes and the Episcopate Auxiliaries. Some cultural activities and entertainment round out the social aspect of the gathering.

As a result of requests by delegates from previous Congresses, another facet has been added to the Congress activities: adult education — a "mini-confer-

ence," if you like. By introducing some themes, some scriptural readings, oral presentations and videos, the delegates have been reminded that the work of the Congress is primarily a "holy work," because it concerned with the administration of God's House, the Church.

According to the By-Laws, the agenda of the Congress is determined by the President upon consultation with the Council, and matters for inclusion in the agenda may be admitted through Parish Councils writing to the President of the Council but not less than sixty days prior to the meeting of the Congress. Thus, the Council offers reports on its activities, and any new matters coming from the parishes would be included according to the procedure.

The 65th Congress was colored by two major events, both historical ones. The first in order of history was the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the purchase of the Vatra in 1937 during the episcopate of His Grace POLICARP Morusca. The second was the presence of His Eminence, Dr. SERAFIM (Joanta) Metropolitan of Germany and Western Europe, Romanian Patriarchate. This was the first time that a hierarch of the Romanian Church has been invited to visit the Episcopate and her parishes since the time of Bishop POLICARP.

Metropolitan SERAFIM has a doctorate from the Serge Theological Institute in Paris and is a disciple of the famous Orthodox Theologian, Oliver Clement. His Eminence defended his doctoral thesis on the subject of Hesychasm and the Prayer of the Heart (the "Jesus Prayer").

Michigan was at her best behavior for this Congress. The weather was cool and still warm; the Diocesan Center grounds were lush green and well maintained; the buildings sporting their recent coat of paint, all of which added to the creation of an atmosphere of Christian love and harmony.

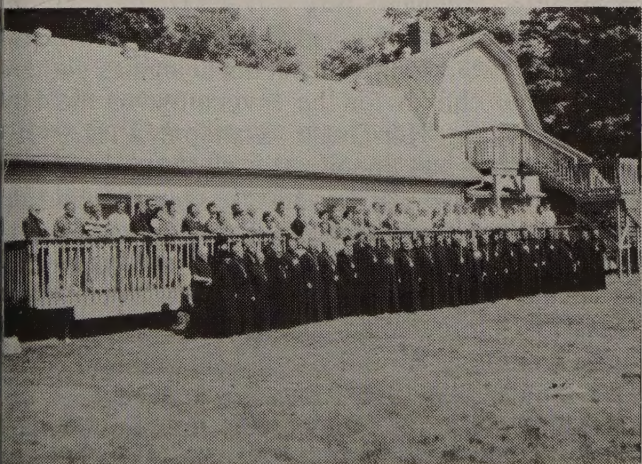
Members of the St. Mary Congress Committee headed by Rev. Fr. Vasile Susan and Mr. Ionel Maioga arrived on Wednesday, July 2, to begin the activity of preparing food for the hundreds of guests and making the necessary physical arrangements for meetings and serving.



Delegates to the Congress in working session in St. Mary Chapel.



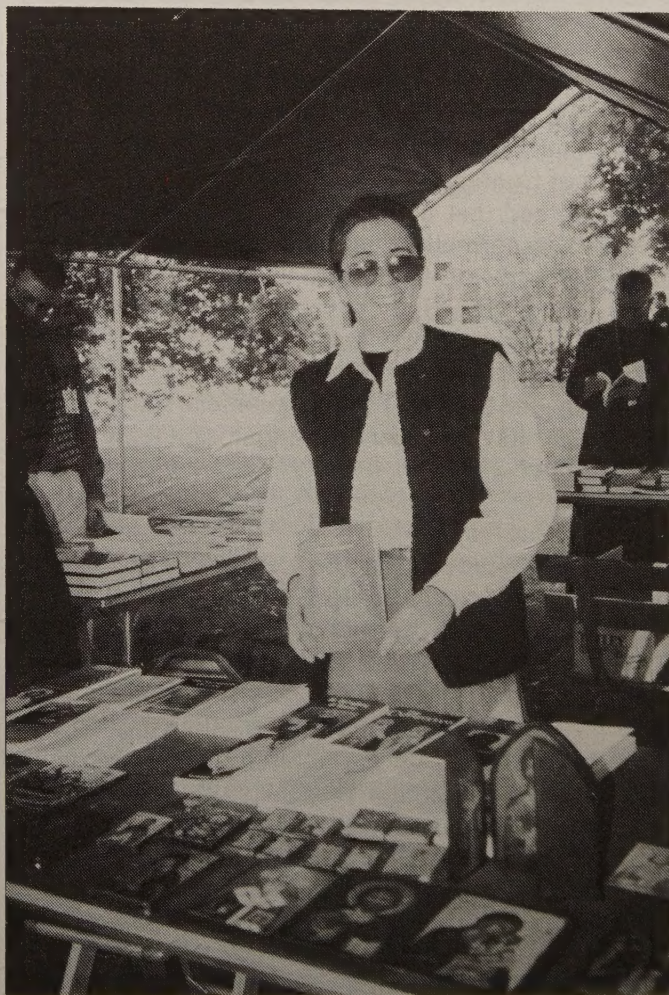
Parish clergy and faithful, led by Metropolitan SERAFIM and Bishop NATHANIEL, gathered in the cemetery at the grave of Archbishop VALERIAN and celebrated a memorial service.



Parish clergy and Lay Delegates pose with Metropolitan SERAFIM and Bishop NATHANIEL at the newly-completed veranda on the west side of ARFORA House.



Metropolitan SERAFIM addresses the Congress with Fr. Constantin Alecse interpreting.



Ruxy Shelden of Dormition Monastery, displays Fr. Roman Braga's new book at the Episcopate's Congress Bookstore.

Clergy Conference

On Thursday, July 3, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at 8:00 A.M. in the "Pioneer Chapel," and clergy and faithful partook of the Holy Eucharist. A "walking breakfast" was served to the clergy who then gathered at the Valerian Trifa Heritage Center at 9:30 at which time remembrance for the deceased hierarchs of the Episcopate and the newly departed, Rev. Fr. Michael Cerghizan, Parish Priest of St. Mary Parish, St. Paul, Minnesota was made. Administrative matters were discussed, and afterwards the clergy broke into deanery assemblies. Lunch was served in the Iancu Hall. A representative from the Episcopate's Blue Cross/Blue Shield Plan, Ms. Lorri Zejac, led the discussion concerning the program. Mr. Mark Chestnut, Assistant Treasurer, with Ms. Zejac, created the clergy health program. It is the Episcopate's hope that all clergy will be under some form of health coverage.

His Eminence, SERAFIM, was introduced by Bishop NATHANIEL to the assembly. The Metropolitan addressed the subject of the frequency of Confession and the frequency of Partaking of the Holy Eucharist. Following his presentation, a lively "Question and Answer" period was held. A few years ago, an article by His Eminence concerning this matter and printed in the "Telegraful Roman/ Romanian Telegraph" printed by the Metropolia of Sibiu, was translated through the efforts of the Episcopate by Rev. Fr. Dan Suciu and distributed to the clergy. This year, the author was present and gave even more life to his stand that the Mystery of Confession is not "tied" to reception of the Eucharist, and that the frequency of reception of the Eucharist is normally that every Christian attending the Divine Liturgy should also be prepared to partake of the Life-giving Body and Blood of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The concluding point of information had to do with informing the clergy of their canonical status in the Episcopate, having received canonical releases from their hierarchs.

Preotese Conference

During the time when the clergy met in deanery sessions, His Grace, Bishop NATHANIEL met with the Preotese in the Episcopal Residence. Dna. Psa. Louisa Todeasa related something about the first Preotese Retreat held at the Vatra last Autumn and the Bishop spoke about the need for continued good dialogue between himself as hierarch and the wives of the clergy. Each person present gave a "thumbnail sketch" of her family. It was agreed that it would be a blessing for the preotese to know one another as a sisterhood and this, it was agreed, would be pursued. The sisterhood, already formed, is "Sts. Martha and Mary." His Grace invited the Preotese to participate in the Clergy Conference sessions in the afternoon, and in particular, for that of His Eminence, SERAFIM.

The Clergy Conference ended with the celebration of Vespers in the chapel. The host parish prepared a

meal for the clergy, their families and guests. Members of the "Clergy Chorale" practiced for their program on Friday, and the Alumni of the "Andrei Saguna" Theological Institute met.

Episcopate Council

The Episcopate Council held its Pre-Congress session in the Trifa Heritage Center. Present for the meeting were: His Grace; Rev. Frs. L. Lazar, Secretary; J. Limbeson, Treasurer; G. Cantor, Auditor; Rev. Frs. R. Grama, Ian Pac-Urar; Laity, D. Chirtu, A. Ciufeu, G. Dobrin, V. Gheorghiu, B. McDonald, A. Srbu; Auxiliaries, D.P. M. Rosco, T. Carto.

Among the matters discussed were the acceptance and presentation of the **1997 Report to the Congress**; ratification of requests for accreditation to the Congress for Frs. Grabowski, Lesko, Mitescu, Schmidt, Tofan; acceptance of Rev. Gabriele Curpene and Grigore Patrulescu into the clergy pending their canonical release; approval to the Sts. Constantine & Helen Mission, Lilburn, Georgia, to solicit funds for its building project.

Discussion was had on the By-Law Articles dealing with the procedure of acceptance of clergy into the Episcopate, and the matter was tabled and recommended for review by the next Council.

The Council will recommend to the Congress that all 18 year-old individuals be approached to become "voting" members of the parishes, and that the parishes should have external audits.

The Treasurer, Rev. Fr. Limbeson, proposed the following list of "Considerations" for the next Council: Priest Compensation Package Standards, Chancery Staff Compensation, ROEA Staff Needs-Analysis & Suggestions, ROEA Operating Revenue, Congress Mandated ROEA Actions, Capital Improvement Funding, Mission Priest Compensation Package, ROEA Youth Director, Mission Outreach, Charitable Works and Long Term Planning.

Episcopate Congress, July 4

At 8:00 A.M., the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the chapel, after which, at 9:30, the delegates gathered in the upper church for the Invocation to the Holy Spirit served by His Grace, Bishop NATHANIEL. The secretariat was appointed with the consensus of the body, and roll call was taken. One hundred delegates were present for the first session and opening quorum. The Agenda was accepted, the Minutes of the 1996 Congress were passed with corrections; the tropar for Those Fallen-Asleep-in-the-Lord as Delegates was sung. A message of congratulations from the US President, Bill Clinton was read (see elsewhere in SOLIA), and the good wishes and blessings from His Beatitude, THEODOSIUS, were expressed.

The President of the Congress, Bishop NATHANIEL, then introduced the Episcopate's guest, the Most Reverend SERAFIM, Metropolitan of Germany and Central Europe. After attending the Congress, His Emi-

nence will be hosted by various parishes in the Ohio-W. Pa, Michigan and Chicago Deaneries of our Episcopate and of the Patriarchal Archdiocese.

His Grace requested that the printed reports on Finances and Parish Contributions be moved to the beginning of the Congress work in that Mr. Mark Chestnut, Assistant Treasurer, who is responsible for the day to day financial operations, had to leave because of family obligations. Auditor, George Cantor, reported on the semi-annual audit and the year to year audit, and moved the acceptance of reports. Accepted.

Reminding the delegates that the work of the Congress is God's work, the President invited all present to read aloud from the OCA, "Our Part in God's Plan," Psalm 139: 13-18 and then a short period of personal meditation was held.

Session two was initiated with the video, "Our Part in God's Plan," from which our delegates understood that God has given to each of us certain talents and gifts for the use of the Church. One hundred and six delegates were present for the session.

Following the 1:00 P.M. lunch, the delegates gathered in the AROY Flag Plaza for a "Te Deum" service for the US Independence Day. The afternoon session began at 3:10 with the Hierarchal Reports, Status of the Clergy, and Status of the Parishes and Parish Events.

The work of the Department of Religious Education was reported by Rev. Fr. Dr. Ian Pac-Urar, who reiterated the obligation of each parish to have a church school, the availability of material, and attend the forthcoming Church School Teachers Conference in Cleveland, September 12-14. Debate was held on the usefulness of a central conference versus regional conferences. The Department will study the matter. The availability of student scholarships was emphasized. Each delegate received a brochure outlining the six scholarships. The Department announced Adult Enrichment Week at the Vatra, October 13- 17, 1997.

Dna. Psal Rosco spoke on the forthcoming camps and made an appeal for funds to complete the Nurses Station/ Camp Director Building. Vaccination Hepatitis "B" will be required of all staff and students for the 1998 camps.

Rev. Fr. Dan Nenson reported on Camp St. Nicholas at the Canada Deanery Centre and invited students from the US to also attend. The DORE in Canada is planning to hold a separate Junior and Senior camp in 1998. The Delegates also received an informative brochure on the camps.

V. R. Constantin Tofan, Chairman of the Department of Missions, highlighted the department work and reemphasized the need for steady and increased financial support. The Chair gave special thanks to the ARFORA and AROY for their line-item annual budget support for the missions. The Canadian Brotherhood sent support to the London, "Holy Cross," mission.

The Episcopate Treasurer, Rev. Fr. John Limbeson,

A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT CLINTON

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 1, 1997

Warm greetings to all those gathered for the 65th annual Episcopate Congress of Clergy, Delegates, and the faithful others of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. I am delighted to join you in celebrating the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the North American Diocesan Center.

Since our nation's founding, religion has played a central role in the lives of our people, and America has stood as a beacon of religious freedom for citizens around the world. Your dedication to this vital tradition has helped to bring strength and hope to our country, and your steadfast devotion to your faith has upheld your parishes in times of both joy and adversity.

Since the establishment of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America as a diocese in 1929, thousands of Orthodox Christians have benefited from your spiritual leadership. I am heartened by your commitment to the values that have guided the Orthodox Church for generations and to creating a society united in peace and the spirit of compassion.

Best wishes for a memorable Congress. ✻

Bill Clinton

talked about the mission of the Church as "Outreach." Using the publication, "The Challenge of Outreach, A Report of the Orthodox Christian Laity," prepared by the OCL of the Greek Archdiocese, he highlighted the following categories: The Unchurched, Non-Orthodox Spouse/Family, Converts, Immigrants, Youth, Senior Citizens, Captives, Women.

The Chair recognized guests, V. R. Mother Gabriela, Archimandrite Felix Dubneac, V.R. R. Grabowski and then called the session to a close.

The delegates, clergy and lay, proceeded to the chapel for vespers. Supper was served in the Tower Pavilion and the special entertainment for the evening was the "Clergy Chorale" under the able direction of Rev. Fr. Traian Petrescu. Making up the group were Rev. Frs. F. Barbos, Remus Bleahu, M. Dobre, A. Fetea, R. Grama, G. Mihalache, M. Morar, M. Oprea, J. Poptelecan, D. Paun, G. Schiop, P. Voin. The Chorale presented a number of religious and folk songs. A special "Sing-along" booklet providing the words, encouraged audience participation. Videos were shown

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Metropolitan SERAFIM and Bishop NATHANIEL are surrounded by clergy and faithful in front of the Episcopal Residence following the Hierarchal Divine Liturgy on Sunday.



The Choir of Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Dearborn Heights, Michigan, beautifully led the responses during the Hierarchal Divine Liturgy on Sunday.



The Closing Banquet on Sunday in the Tower Pavilion hosted a crowd of 400-500 people.



Metropolitan SERAFIM, through the prayer of the laying on of hands, ordains the Deacon Florian Anton Frunza into the Holy Priesthood during the Sunday Divine Liturgy.

Congress *Cont. from page 5*

in the assembly hall: "Romania Today," "Cotroceni Palace," and "North Bucovina Monasteries."

Saturday, July 5

The Congress was reconvened at 10:00 A.M. with a count of one hundred and four delegates seated. A second scriptural reading followed by personal reflection began the work of the day; Micah 6:6-8; Matthew 22:34-40; Romans 12; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22.

Rev. Fr. Dn. David Oancea presented an oral report on the work of the Department of Publications in addition to the written report. He informed the delegates of the Episcopate website (<http://www.roea.org>). He responded in the affirmative to a request that parish information be included.

The Bible Society and Holy Land Tours associated with the Department have been terminated. A remainder of \$4,000.00 from that account is ear-marked for future reference. A request was made that articles in Romanian be translated into English.

It was brought up that many English publications exist, and the need for more Romanian information is dire. The Clergy were invited to transmit articles to the department for inclusion in SOLIA. Others felt that the "Romanian Spirituality" needed to be presented to the English readers. Other suggestions were

to increase the SOLIA subscription rate and/or encourage more extensive use of the Internet.

The Chair of the Assembly, His Grace NATHANIEL, introduced Metropolitan SERAFIM to the Delegates. R. Dean Constantin Alecse interpreted. Highlights from his presentation are as follows. His Eminence expressed appreciation for the work of Archbishop VALERIAN in North America and noted that our gathering at the Vatra is a result of his activities. In his opinion, Orthodoxy in North America is "100 years ahead" of Orthodoxy in most of Western Europe. His Eminence expressed spiritual joy that the Church had embraced many converts to the faith and stated that the Church will gain much from their experiences. Reflecting on Orthodoxy around the world, Metropolitan SERAFIM emphasized that he and the Romanian Church are open to full cooperation with all Orthodox Christians around the world and especially in strengthening the unity of the Church. In the end, His Eminence expressed the greetings and blessings from His Beatitude, TEOCTIST, of the Romanian Church. The presentation was greeted with standing ovation and the "Hierarchal Anthem."

Following the lunch in the Tower Pavilion, the Delegates reassembled at 2:00 for the final session.

V.R. Richard Grabowski reported for the Department of Christian Assistance, and in particular, on the past activities of the "Help For Romania" program which was placed under this department, which was sending corn seed to Moldova which came through the U.S. Government and was distributed through Metropolitan PETRU and his Chancery. Answering questions about the US Seed Program, the presenter stated that the seed is a gift from the companies which have no future orders for the seed and use the donation as "write-off." The US Government pays for the travel expenses to those former "Soviet" states.

To a question as to the amount of \$4,000 given to CORA last year, the Chair responded that this was based on membership figures, and this year's contribution was from the Administration Funds.

The Chair presented the report on the Vatra Administration. A question was raised concerning the failure of John Nika to pay his monthly financial obligation to the Episcopate. The Chair answered that it is in the hands of the legal advisors. At this time, he is in arrears by \$1,200.00.

The progress on the Bota Administration Building is moving slowly due to a number of alterations in plans and materials. At this time, the walls are up and the roof structure is in place. Work should be terminated before the Autumn.

Rev. Fr. Remus Grama, our representative to the OCA External Affairs Department, offered his report as printed in the Congress book. He commented that we (the Episcopate and the Patriarchal Archdiocese) had reached liturgical unity. The past year was one of consolidation. We rejoice in the presence of Metropolitan SERAFIM and in his acknowledgment of Arch-

bishop VALERIAN's works. Fr. Grama responded to the question of our position in the Orthodox Church in America by stating that it has not changed. The Chair responded to the query of why the term "Mother Church" was used when referring to the Romanian Church by stating that, in fact, the Episcopate does consider the Romanian Church its Mother and will always remain so as an historical fact.

A clarification of our participation in CORA and its interest in NATO was requested. Fr. Grama responded by stating that NATO is for peace, and the Church seeks peace in the world. The Chair added that CORA is a free will organization which speaks out as a voice for the American Romanian Community.

All the reports were accepted to this time.

The Chair asked for and received consensus to send greetings to the Romanian Archdiocese which was meeting in Edmonton and Boian for its Congress.

The following budgets were presented and passed: Administrative - \$345,000.00; Department of Publications - \$119,650.00; Department of Missions - \$50,000.00; Department of Religious Education - \$29,300.00.

Auxiliary Reports

Having heard all of the Administration reports, the Congress received the Auxiliary Reports. It ratified the ARFORA Revised Constitution and By-Laws. Dna. Psa. Rosco, International President, brought to the attention of the delegates that the ARFORA works with participation of only half of the local auxiliaries, but has managed to increase the St. Paraschiva Mission program from \$6,000 in 1995 to \$7,000 in 1997, and looks forward to \$8,000 in the next year.

Mr. Joe Bologna, International AROY President, stated that there are 13 active chapters and two chapters pending. He exhorted the clergy and delegates to support the youth and to encourage their involvement in AROY. The new cement basketball court is complete and paid for by AROY.

The President of the US Brotherhood, Mr. Tom Carto, added to his written Congress Report an invitation to the Delegates to become "New Founders of the Vatra" with a \$60.00 donation for the anniversary this year. His Grace also announced his appointment of Rev. Fr. Leonte Copacia as the first Spiritual Advisor to the Brotherhood.

Representing the Canadian Brotherhood was Treasurer, Terry Holovach. Reviewing the written report to the Congress, Mr. Holovach painted a picture of much activity and dedication in his auxiliary.

All Auxiliary reports were accepted.

The Episcopate Council recommended that the Congress mandate parishes to engage external financial audits for all operations as does the Episcopate. No discussion, no action. It also recommended that the parishes be financially responsible for all individuals 18 and older. No discussion, no action.

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New Council

The Nominating Committee of Rev. Fr. Ian Pacurar, Dan Chirtu and George Dobrin presented the slate to the President. The following were elected to the Episcopate Council for 1998-99 Congresses: Clergy - J. Bunea, R. Grama, L. Lazar, J. Limbeson, I. Pacurar, and alternate, Hieromonk Joseph (Morris); Laity - Percy Avram, Dr. Eleanor Bujea, Nicholas Cocora, Liviu Constantinescu, Cornel Cotosman, Cornelia Merchant, Georgeta Poliac, John Serban, John Stanitz, Matthew Wright and alternates, Michael Datish and Dr. Nicholas David.

Lay members to the Church Tribunal were elected by consensus: Michael Strugar and Prof. Aureliu Ciufecu and alternates Dr. Nicholas David and Nicholas Cocora.

The Congress consented that a letter of Congratulations should be sent to His Beatitude, THEODOSIUS, from the Congress on the celebration of thirty years as a hierarch.

Several suggestions off the floor concerning the Congress were as follows: to hold it every two years and in between to have a clergy conference only; to hold the Congress only for one day; to mail the Report to the delegates before the Congress sessions.

Professor Aureliu Ciufecu brought to the attention of the Delegates that the European Council, comprising 16 nations, including Greece, unanimously recognize the existence of the Romanian Macedonians in the Balkan Peninsula and the existence of a Latin presence south of the Danube; and as such, the Orthodox Churches in this area should be reminded to support the unique spiritual needs of these people. A memorandum to these Churches is requested. The assembly responded with a unanimous positive consensus.

The Congress ended with thanks from the Chair to the Host Parish, St. Mary, Chicago, Illinois, Rev. Fr. Vasile Susan and Mr. Ionel Maiogan and the Committee; St. George Cathedral Ladies Auxiliary for the ARFORA Coffee Shop and the Saints Peter & Paul Choir, Dearborn Heights, Michigan, for the responses to the Sunday Divine Liturgy.

The work of the 65th Congress was concluded with the singing of the Hierarchal Anthem.

A group photograph was taken on the new veranda of the ARFORA House, and then the new Episcopate Council met to take the oath of office in the assembly hall. Offices elected were the V. R. Laurence Lazar, Episcopate Council Secretary; Rev. Fr. John Limbeson, Episcopate Treasurer and Mr. Percy Avram and John Serban, Episcopate Auditors.

Vespers of the Resurrection were sung in the Chapel, and clergy were present to hear the confessions of those requesting.

Romanian Mititei was the speciality of the supper, and during and after the meal the "Delta" ensemble from Troy, Michigan, entertained the guests until 11:45.

July 6, Sunday

Matins was sung in the upper church and then the procession with auxiliary banners, monastics and clergy escorted the hierarchs to the church. His Eminence, SERAFIM, had the proteia and His Grace, NATHANIEL, concelebrated with him. Both hierarchs distributed the Holy Eucharist to the many faithful who came forward to receive it from their hands. His Eminence, SERAFIM, gave the homily at the conclusion of the Eucharistic celebration.

Bishop NATHANIEL introduced all the clergy to those present, and commented that the celebration was another sign of the Oneness, Holiness, Catholicity and Apostolicity of the Church through the presence of Metropolitan SERAFIM. "As Elisha asked for the power of Elijah's robe, so today we have offered the mitre of Bishop POLICARP and the vestments of Archbishop VALERIAN to be worn by our guest as a sign of the oneness of the hierarchy and the continuity of the teaching of the Church."

After the Great Entrance, Deacon Florian Anton Frunza was ordained into the Holy Priesthood at the hands of Metropolitan, SERAFIM. The father of the new priest, V. R. Archpriest Anton Frunza, Dean of Jassy, who with his preteasa had come for his diaconal ordination as well, and V. R. Constantin Alecse, escorted him around the Holy Table. Young Father Florian's mother, wife and son were also present for the occasion.

The traditional Congress Banquet was held in the Tower Hall which the Host Parish had decorated with various flags and floral arrangements. Traditional Romanian sausage and stuffed cabbage ("home made") were featured.

Guests at the head tables included the Chancery Staff, Auxiliary Presidents and Representatives, guests representing the Trifa Heritage Center and the Union and League. Remarks were made by Mr. Jack Moga, President of U & L; V. R. Anton Frunza and Fr. Florian Anton Frunza; Metropolitan SERAFIM and His Grace, NATHANIEL. Master of Ceremonies was V. R. Lazar.

Bishop NATHANIEL stated that although we are celebrating the Vatra purchase this year, we are really aware that a "spiritual" vatra has existed for much longer. Just as the Church is first the assembly of the faithful which, in time makes a physical building, so too, the faithful were here long before 60 years; and in time, the Vatra came to symbolize that spiritual unity."

The busy crowds, the close schedule, the bustle of the kitchen, all activities were over, and quietness descended over the Vatra by vespers of that evening. Everyone went home filled with spiritual and physical nourishment, thoughts for programs to do and thanks to God for his mercy on us and on our Holy Episcopate. The quiet will last for a week, at which time the Camp Vatra for Juniors will begin! ❀

A Participant

CORA MEETING AT WHITE HOUSE ON SUBJECT OF ROMANIA AND NATO

A meeting, sponsored by the Congress of Romanian-Americans (CORA) (Congresul Americanilor de Origina Romania), was held in the Roosevelt Room at the White House on Thursday, June 19, 1997. Fourteen CORA representatives, including some of its Board members, and leaders in the Romanian-American community, met with the Special Assistant to the President and Director for Central and Eastern Europe for the National Security Council, a Special Assistant to the Secretary of State and the Associate Director of the Office of Public Liaison at the White House.

The subject of the meeting was Romania's exclusion from the first group of nations to be invited into a dialogue to include them in the first group to enter NATO. Administration officials explained the reasoning behind this decision.

The CORA delegation aggressively challenged the reasons given as being only political and not reasons related to security and stability in the region and Europe at large. Throughout the 1-1/2 hour meeting, CORA representatives were respectful, but unaccepting, and challenged the arguments of the White House.

Bishop NATHANIEL, Prelate of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, and Chairman of CORA's Board, focused on the problems in Bosnia, Turkey, Cypress, Albania, Macedonia and the Middle East. He stressed that Romania's geographical, military and positive relations in the region would be a significant plus with regard to these problem areas if Romania were in NATO.

Alexandru Sturdza, representing the Free Romania Fund, reminded the administration that "Great Statesmen" are known to change their minds, and he hoped the President would reconsider Romania.

Mark Meyer, Chairman of the Romanian American Chamber of Commerce, on hearing Administration reasons for the decision to invite only the 3 countries, questioned whether or not this decision reflected an unwarranted lack of trust toward Romania.

Armand Scala, President of CORA, closed by saying that as an American, he felt the administration had made a mistake; and, he hoped the President would find "real opposition" waiting in Madrid to the proposition of inclusion of only 3 nations in the first wave. Mr. Scala asked that the President reconsider his position and put forth the 3 + 2 concept, that Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic be invited to join now and Romania and Slovenia be invited to join in 6 or 12 months. He asked that the President announce this in Madrid.

A.R.F.O.R.A. UPDATE

It is already August, and the summer is almost gone. Children (and Moms!) are counting the days until school begins. As Orthodox Christians, we are also counting the days left on the Church Calendar, since September 1 marks the beginning of a new year in the Church. Every year as January 1 approaches, people make "New Year's Resolutions." As the new Church year approaches, I ask you to re-commit yourself to your local parish and to the diocese.

If you look up the word "commit" in the dictionary, you will find it means "to devote oneself unreservedly or unlimitedly." How should you apply this to the Church? The first place to start is with your dues. Have you paid your parish dues and auxiliary dues? If not, now is the perfect time to do so, since the income in most parishes drops during the summer months, but the bills must always be paid on time.

Secondly, make Church the priority in your life and in your family. Be in church every Sunday morning — on time. Go to special Holy Day or Lenten services. Attend all meetings and take an active part in them.

Thirdly, share your God-given talents with the Church. If you enjoy singing, join the choir and attend the practices. If you enjoy cooking, help out at dinners. If you are good at organizing activities, help organize fund-raisers such as bake sales and arts-and-craft shows.

Lastly, if you enjoy working with children, offer your services as a Church School teacher. If your parish does not have a Church School, then talk to your priest and parish council to see how you can help organize one.

Now that you have read through all these suggestions, remember the words of St. Paul: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13) and "... whatever you do, do all to the Glory of God."✠

Psa. Mary Ellen Rosco, President

CORA is an umbrella organization of 18 other organizations in the U.S., consisting of Americans of Romanian origin and others, representing thousands of Americans. These organizations have been responsible for approximately \$60 million of humanitarian aid to the people of Romania. CORA is a founding member of the Central and East European Coalition.✠

**For more information on CORA, contact
Armand A. Scala at Tel: (703) 448-3372 or Fax:
(703) 448-9361.**

VACATIONING

There's an old monastic expression: "We should pray like we will die tomorrow and work like we are going to live forever." This saying may make us feel that, for a serious Christian, taking a vacation is something to be avoided! The truth is, vacations have been a part of our historical and religious lives from the beginning.

The Bible tells us that after the six days of creation, God rested on the seventh day — in "modern" language, He took a vacation. "By the seventh day, God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work" (Gen. 2:2). In the Old Testament period, the "days of vacation" (holy days or "holidays"), such as the Sabbath and Passover, were an important part of the religious rites and traditions. We remember, however, that Jesus was displeased with the legalistic way in which the people of the Old Testament observed them.

Since the New Testament period up until today, vacations have continually been a part of the life of a Christian. Sundays, Easter, Christmas, Pentecost — these days were named holy days, celebrations of persons (either Jesus or a saint) or events connected to the history of salvation.

What is sad is the fact that often in our lives, the holy day becomes for us *only* a vacation and not a remembrance of persons or events from the *history* of the salvation brought to us by Jesus. We don't use this holy time as a means of appropriating this salvation for us to the good of our everlasting future.

Vacation *should be* a time when we break away from the everyday routine, when we rest physically and spiritually and enjoy things we don't have time to enjoy during the rest of the year. But vacation should not be *only* that for a Christian. Our vacations should not be vacations from God, but *Christian vacations* — a time when our relation with God (through prayers, meditation, learning, love for Him and our neighbors) is reconstructed or improved.

We find excuses all through the year when we are busy working for why we don't have time enough to read the Bible, to pray, to go to Church, to visit the sick and suffering as much as we should or would like to. But, we cannot use this excuse when we are on vacation. We visit our friends, we show our love to our relatives; but that's nothing, because even non-Christians do this. We as Christians should do more, extending our love even to those who hate us. Vacation is a time for resting, so let us put aside our wars, our arguments, our hate, and all "evil things."

Vacation is also a time to travel — leaving the town behind and taking off to the mountains, to the beach, to foreign countries. We as Christians shouldn't forget our Lord on such vacations. Make an extra effort to pray, to go to Church, to read the Bible and religious books. Look at the mountains and remember

NEWS FROM FALLS CHURCH PARISH



Colonel Joseph Bergantz (third from right), a member of Protection of the Holy Mother of God Orthodox Church in Falls Church, VA, was recently promoted to the rank of Brigadier General. Joining him at the Pentagon ceremony were his parish priest, Fr. Alexander F.C. Webster (second from right), a chaplain in the Virginia Army National Guard in the rank of Major, together with several fellow parishioners: (from the left) Joseph Kumbera, Susan Kumbera, U.S. Army Major Lee Hojnicky and (on the far right) U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel John Bilyeu. General Bergantz has been transferred to Redstone Arsenal in Alabama, where he will take command of the U.S. Army's Commanche attack helicopter program.

that the mountains and their majesty are from God and admire their beauty. Remember that the ocean and its grandeur are from God, and enjoy its beauty. Remember that nothing — neither beautiful cathedral nor historical monuments — could be built or made without the help of God, and praise Him. We should praise Him with all our hearts.

Of course, we can say many things about how to make a vacation a Christian vacation, something which can nurture our spiritual life, and a means for our salvation. We should remember this one thing: vacations were part of God's plan for us in order that we may fill our Christian lives with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Make God your traveling friend, your vacationing partner — this summer and always. ✱

Father Cornel Todeas

PARISH BULLETIN NOTES

Regina, SK. St. George. As a special Lenten project, the Church School collected items to help children requiring temporary shelter at Transition House, a refuge for victims of domestic violence. ... Several pussy willow trees were donated and planted on our grounds. ... We all enjoyed the fun and fellowship at our Church School picnic.

Montreal, PQ. St. Nicholas. We enjoyed our double celebration commemorating both May 10, 1877 (Romanian Independence Day), and Mother's Day, with lectures and an artistic program featuring a play, poetry, songs and dances. Our Ladies Auxiliary provided an excellent buffet. ... In support of our Building Program, we have a new slogan: "Give a dollar for a new altar!"

Indianapolis, IN. Sts. Constantine & Helen. Congratulations to our High School graduates: Kenneth Madsen and Laura Cosgarea; and to College graduates: Cristina Lazarides, a BA in General Studies from Indiana U., and Bill Wolf, a Masters in Music Composition from Butler U. Bill has earned a full scholarship to State U. of NY at Stony Brook toward a PhD in Music Composition. ... We honored our Church School students and teachers at our closing ceremonies on Acknowledgement Day.

Glendale, AZ. St. John. We are busily planning for the building of our new church edifice which will begin this Fall. We hope everyone will contribute to our Building Fund. ... Our dance group, Doua Florii, participated in the local Multi Ethnic Week, and their performance was excellent. They are now having a fund raising program to raise money to travel to Kitchener, ON, to perform at the Festival there during the Labor Day weekend. ... With great sorrow, we held a parastas in memory of Mrs. Becky Heius Tuttle, our good friend and benefactor.

Dysart, SK. St. George. At its annual banquet, the Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan bestowed an Honorary Life Membership to Dr. Eleanor Bujea for her dedicated work for the organization. Congratulations!

Regina, SK. St. Nicholas. As the oldest Romanian Orthodox parish in North America, we had a wonderful celebration for our 95th Anniversary. After Vespers services on Saturday, many joined us for a tasty barbecue and fellowship hour. Our Festive Banquet, following church services on Sunday, was held at the Regina Ballroom in order to accommodate the many who attended. We rejoiced at the presence of Bishop NATHANIEL at all of our activities.

Calgary, AB. St. Mary. As a wrap-up of our Church School year, the students, teachers, and parents had an enjoyable outing at Heritage Park. Many sincere thanks to all our dedicated teachers.

Canton, OH. St. George. Our Ladies Auxiliary sponsored the Deanery ARFORA Retreat at our parish. ... Our local chapter hosted the AROY Sports Weekend which, we think, was the best we've had in recent years. His Grace, Bishop NATHANIEL was our special guest.

Fairlawn, OH. Presentation of Our Lord. AkROY sponsored the Mother's Day Banquet. ... Congratulations to Dave Sattler who graduated from the 188th Session of the F.B.I. Academy. Also, to Scott Groza who received a BS in Biology from Texas A & M University; and to Dr. Cindy Barb who received The Teacher of the Year Award from Kent State U.

Chicago, IL. Holy Nativity. There are many repairs to be made in our new church building. The roof is now being repaired. We are hoping to have everything completed by the time of our dedication services in September.

Warren, OH. Holy Resurrection. To conclude our Church School Program for the season, everyone was invited to an Open House to visit the classrooms, followed by a Coffee Hour in honor of the students and teachers. ... Our church hosted a Pan-Orthodox Divine Liturgy, followed by a fellowship Coffee Hour. ... The men did a beautiful job in preparing and serving a delicious Mother's Day Dinner. ... A Brunch was prepared for Father's Day. ... We congratulate our High School graduates Justin Becker, John Ross, and Kristen Petrilla.

Warren, MI. Descent Holy Spirit. Many attended the dinner celebrating our parish Hram. ... We now list 550 members in our church roster. ✱

Compiled by Florence Sirb

Don't Miss the **48th ANNUAL A.R.O.Y. CONFERENCE**

Presentation of Our Lord Church
Fairlawn, Ohio

AUGUST 28-31, 1997

Contact: (330) 666-8054

See July issue of *Solia*, p. 5

CONGRATULATIONS STUDENTS & GRADUATES!



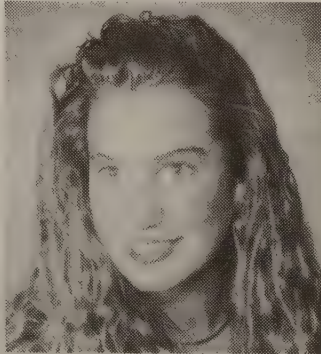
Rebecca Ann Lesko

Rebecca Ann Lesko graduated in the top twenty of her senior class from Redlands High School, Redlands, CA on June 12, 1997. Rebecca is the daughter of Fr. Deacon Andrew and Karen Lesko and is a member of St. Anne Mission, Pomona, CA where she teaches Sunday School.

Active in community events, Rebecca recently received the Girl Scout Gold Award for her work with the elderly. She is also a volunteer at Loma Linda Hospital where she worked in the Children's Hospital and the Physical Therapy Department.

In September, Rebecca will start her studies in biology at the University of California — Riverside. Her career goal is to become a Physical Therapist.

Elizabeth Scavnicky, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Gary E. Scavnicky, Troy, Michigan and granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Elie Roman of Youngstown, Ohio was one amongst one hundred and forty-eight students who were honored and awarded scholarships at Wayne State University, Detroit, School of Business Administration Recognition and Award Program on Friday, April 25. She was also one of the ten School of Business Administration students who have maintained a four-point average. As a result of her academic standing, on Sunday, May 4th, Elizabeth was honored and inducted into the Wayne State University Chapter of the Golden Key National Honor Society. This prestigious organization recognizes an elite group of students who are internationally esteemed for their dedication to scholarship and excellence. Elizabeth, who is majoring in Marketing and minoring in French, will be attending the University of Toledo Center for Studies Program in Montpellier, France, from June 26 through August 1, 1997 where she will earn credits toward her French minor. Finally, the French Department at Wayne State University awarded Elizabeth the first prize in the French Poetry Contest for her well-written, surrealis-



Elizabeth Scavnicky

tic love poem "L'attente." Having served on numerous positions at Cathedral AROY, Elizabeth is now the National AROY representative to the CEOYLA national orthodox youth organization. Elizabeth also celebrated her 21st birthday on May 24, 1997. We congratulate her. She does our Romanian heritage and her parents proud. ✽

A.R.F.O.R.A. UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

A.R.F.O.R.A. is pleased to announce the A.R.F.O.R.A. UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP winner. This is the fourth year this scholarship has been made available to young ladies who are members of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. This means that they are active voting members of their parish and have all the responsibilities and privileges assumed by full membership. Another of the prerequisites is that the candidates must have completed one year of their undergraduate program and must be registered in the next year of undergraduate university education.



Madlen Gardus

The 1997 A.R.F.O.R.A. Undergraduate Scholarship was awarded to **Madlen Gardus**. Her parents are Paul and Nazeli Gardus. Madlen is a member of St. Nicholas Mission of Montreal, Quebec in Canada.

Madlen has chosen as her college major the field of Stomatology. She obtained her diploma in Stomatology in Bucharest. Unfortunately, her diploma is not recognized in Canada, so she was required to restart the program. Upon graduating, Madlen plans to offer her services to the church community as well as helping newly arrived immigrants in the way she was helped by the mission.

In her parish, Madlen worked with the ladies auxiliary, assisting them with their various activities and helping in any way she could. ✽

tic love poem "L'attente." Having served on numerous positions at Cathedral AROY, Elizabeth is now the National AROY representative to the CEOYLA national orthodox youth organization. Elizabeth also celebrated her 21st birthday on May 24, 1997. We congratulate her. She does our Romanian heritage and her parents proud. ✽

LETTER TO THE EDITOR AROY - A NEW GENERATION

It is well known that the future of an institution is secured by its young generation; and, that without youth, there will be no future. During the past decade and more, a new generation of Romanian-American Orthodox has silently and adamantly emerged. They are mainly, but not exclusively, the "alumni" of the Vatra Camps.

Preoteasa Mary Ellen Rosco, the Director of the Vatra Camps, has had a paramount role in forming this new generation. She has taken care of the children in a myriad of ways. Most importantly, she has loved them with the most authentic and moving form of love — the love of a parent who, in pain, is able to correct when necessary.

These children are now the young people who have created a new AROY, or rather, in a manner that is typical to American history, they have "reinvented" an existing institution. Like each generation before them and like all generations that will come after them, this new generation of AROY has brought certain characteristics to its own specific and unique "rendezvous with destiny." This generation has an authentic spiritual awareness and a clear and genuine moral understanding. That is to say that they realize that there are good things and bad things, and between them is and should be no peace.

It is my conviction that this new generation, people in their twenties, should be entrusted with authority and responsibility in the Episcopate's affairs. Young age should not be a deterrent, because many times old age is a liability and not an asset. We should always remember that from the beginning of history, in moments of supreme crisis (such as wars), each people always entrusted their fate to the courage and determination of the very young.

I am convinced that this new generation of Romanian-American Orthodox will not fail their Episcopate; and, I am equally convinced that the time to put the new wine into new skins is now. ✽

Alexandru Nemoianu, Archivist

V.D. Trifa Romanian American Heritage Center

1997 ORTHODOX CONFERENCE ON MISSIONS & EVANGELISM

Sponsored by the
Orthodox Christian Missions Center (OCMC)

August 28 - September 2, 1997

Antiochian Village • Ligonier, Pennsylvania

Questions? Call toll-free (888) 968-4014

TRANSFIGURATION MONASTERY

Ellwood City, PA

ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE & 30TH ANNIVERSARY

Presiding Hierarch & Homilist
The Rt. Rev. NICHOLAS
Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

Schedule of Events

Tuesday, August 5

6:00 p.m. Vigil
9:00 p.m. Refreshments and Fellowship

Wednesday, August 6

10:00 a.m. Procession to Pavilion
Hierarchical Liturgy
Noon Outdoor Lunch
1:00 p.m. Fellowship, Enjoying Grounds
2:30 p.m. Sacrament of Holy Unction

Local hotels:

Super 8 - New Castle, PA (412-658-8849)
Ber-Nita Bed & Breakfast,
Ellwood City, PA (412-752-1455)

MIDWEST CLERGY WIVES RETREAT

The Midwest Clergy Wives 11th Annual Retreat is scheduled for the weekend of September 19-21, 1997, at the Romanian Episcopate/OCA ("The Vatra") in Grass Lake, Michigan. The theme for this year's weekend is "Lead Us By Still Waters," focusing on the need for personal and ecclesial Spiritual Renewal as a priority, even with the busy lives we lead. We are very excited to have as our retreat leaders Father John and Lyn Breck, who are extremely experienced in working with clergy and their families and are directors of the St. Silouan Retreat Center in South Carolina.

This weekend is a wonderful opportunity for all our clergy wives throughout the Midwest to come together in a spirit of fellowship and love, and to receive this spiritual nourishment that all of us need. This program also includes a visit to the Holy Dormition Monastery for Saturday Vespers and dinner. The weekend concludes with the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning, followed by brunch.

For more information, please contact: Michelle Jannakos at 810-695-5175. ✽

SEPTEMBER ISSUE DEADLINE
August 15

THE BEST WAY TO SPEND SUNDAY MORNING

In the school where I teach, there are about 200 employees, of whom I am the only Orthodox. It's not that people sit around and discuss their religious beliefs, but we do tend to chat about our lives and families. Quite often around the lunch tables on Monday, the talk will be about what we did on the weekend — the day trips to get out of the city environment, the Sunday brunch with friends and family. When I tell my friends that I went to church on Sunday, they look at me sympathetically, and if I happen to mention that my husband is a priest, they look at me even more sympathetically. With that explanation, they take it for granted that I have no choice about how I spend my Sunday mornings.

Well, they're right. I really don't have a choice. But it's not because my husband is the priest. It's because I don't know what I'd do without church. Every Sunday morning brings with it an enormous gift of love and forgiveness in Christ's presence in Holy Communion.

Christ said he came not to save the righteous people but the sinners, and by golly that's me. One of the first parables that really touched me after I became Orthodox was the one about the Sower who planted seeds in the ground. I must have worried for at least five years that I was like those seeds that spring up quickly then die just as quickly. Eventually however, I knew that I belonged in the Orthodox Church, and that I was there to stay, no matter how weak my faith.

But what about the rest of the story — the other seeds that fell among the thorns which grew up and choked them? There were years I really struggled to come to church with all the distractions and obstacles that ordinary life tosses at all of us. Now, almost twenty-five years later, I'm still wondering if I'm going to yield any grain at all, the way the parable promises at the end.

Or take another parable, the story of the Pharisee and the Publican. Our priests always warn us not to be like the Pharisee who condemns the sinful Publican. But have you ever worried you might be the worst of both of them, with the worldly sinfulness of the Publican during the week and the judgmental pride of the Pharisee on Sunday? I surely have.

One of the people I admire most in the Bible is Jesus' disciple, Peter. Here is a man I can identify with. He's always rushing headlong into some activity, probably without thinking it through first. He's impulsive and headstrong, almost always with the

I REMEMBER THE VATRA WHEN ...

I remember the Vatra when Episcopate members young and old, would literally count the days to the next Episcopate Congress. That, along with the A.R.O.Y. Convention, was an event no one would want to miss. Almost like salmon drawn to the headwaters of their birth, parishioners from all over the Americas would converge on the Vatra. They attended not only to sit in on the meeting to watch the Episcopate evolving from a Church of Eastern European immigrants into a genuine Orthodox witness in the Americas, but also to observe the progressive transformation of the Vatra (e.g., demolition of old farm buildings, completion of the Chapel, the latest dormitory, the Troitzza, the Heritage Center). Over the years I recall choir competitions, festive activities sponsored by A.R.O.Y. to give the youngsters something to do besides scurrying through the crowd, and other such Saturday programs for all in attendance who literally, filled the Vatra grounds to capacity. ✽

Gary N. Broth

best of intentions, but not always there on the following through. When Jesus was betrayed, Peter tried hard to follow Him, and waited around with the soldiers for some news. That took a lot of courage. But when he was confronted by the soldiers, he denied Christ three times before remembering Christ's words, that that was exactly what he would do.

How could Peter ever get beyond his despicable behavior? What I admire him most for is that in the depths of his despair at what he'd done, he never lost faith in God's love and willingness to forgive him. And he went on to become one of the greatest leaders of the early Church.

Now I don't propose to be a great church leader and I know that I'll always have a long way to go to live my faith the way I should. At the end of the liturgy, the priest prays that "the whole day may be perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless." This seems like an incredibly optimistic prayer to me. I'd be happy to be like that for the next ten minutes! But I hold on to a prayer we say after Communion, in which we ask God to preserve us "under your shelter and under the shadow of your wings." That lovely image comforts and reassures me that no matter how sinful and unworthy I am, God is there to forgive me and help me to stay on the right path.

So do I share all of this with my friends at lunch? Of course not. But I wish I could tell them all they're missing out on on Sunday mornings. ✽

Psa. Nicole Mitescu

SOLIA AUGUST 199

PARISH REGISTER

BAPTISMS

Ardeleanu, Katherine, daughter of Drs. Ovidiu G. & Irinel Ardeleanu, Baltimore, MD. St. Mary, St. Paul, MN. Godparents: Drs. Lucius & Arina Gliga.

Bakaluca, Elena, daughter of Nelu & Dorica Bakaluca, Hamtramck, MI. Sts. Peter & Paul, Dearborn Hts., MI. Godparents: Jonel & Sue Stingui.

Bratu, Sebastian, son of Sebastian & Mihaela V. Bratu, North York, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Dan & Sabina Melinte.

Codorean, Vanessa, daughter of Gabriel S. & Angela Codorean, North York, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Cornel & Gabriela Cazan.

Cutean, Sandra Teodora, daughter of Calin & Nicoleta Cutean, Garden City, MI. Sts. Peter & Paul, Dearborn Hts., MI. Godparents: Steve & Roxana Beres.

Dumitrescu, Monica Cristina, daughter of Cristian Paul & Carmen Dumitrescu, Montreal, PQ. St. Nicholas, Montreal PQ. Godparents: Radu & Cristina Repanovici.

Dumitru, Adriadna Larissa, daughter of Mihaela & Paul Dumitru, Portland, OR. St. Mary, Portland, OR. Godparent: Elena Botez.

Faur, Eliza Carolina, daughter of Horia & Daniela G. Faur, Chapel Hill, NC. Holy Cross, Alexandria, VA. Godparents: Relu & Rodica Ionescu.

Faur, George Victor, son of Horia & Daniela G. Faur, Chapel Hill, NC. Holy Cross, Alexandria, VA. Godparents: Viorel & Elena Ionescu.

Finichiu, Julian David, son of Mihai & Marinela Finichiu, Montreal, PQ. St. Nicholas, Montreal, PQ. Godparents: Ana & Eugen Nicolae.

Fritsch, Ovidiu Aron, son of Adrian & Brindusa Fritsch, Mississauga, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Daniel & Oana Marcu.

Gherghe, Sebastian Tudor, son of Catalin & Madalina Gherghe, Toronto, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Mircea & Camelia Cristian.

Marian, Phillip Michael, son of Mihai T. & Elena Marian, Thornhill, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparent: Nicolae Niculescu.

Munte, Christian Dan, son of Mircea & Adriana Munte, Livonia, MI. Sts. Peter & Paul, Dearborn Hts., MI. Godparents: Emil & Codruta Bozintan.

Popovici, Diana, daughter of Cristian & Cristiana Popovici, Toronto, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Petru & Persida Neagrau.

Rowan Stuart Mathew Lorne, son of Lorne G.P. & Angela M. Rowan, Abbotsford, BC. St. Elias, Lennard, MB. Godparents: Norman & Natalie Tashe, Mary L. Thorne.

Sarga, William Kevin, son of Vasile & Tracy Sarga, Toronto, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Gabriela Ulmeanu, Ivanis Mihai, Daniela Bogdan.

Serbanescu, Andrew, son of George & Sanda Serbanescu, Scarborough, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Dragos & Dimitrina Grigorincu.

Toma, Traian, son of Nicolae & Elena C.B. Toma, Brossard, PQ. St. Nicholas, Montreal, PQ. Godparents: Alexandra Papacostas & Petros Malis.

Tufan, Daniel C. Cristian, son of Valentin E. & Elena C. Tufan, Montreal, PQ. St. Nicholas, Montreal, PQ. Godparents: Emil & Simona Patas.

RECEIVED INTO THE CHURCH

Senger, Jennifer L.M.C., Regina, SK. St. George, Regina, SK. Rev. Fr. John Mancantelli.

MARRIAGES

Saftu, Mozes and Elena Pereteatcu, Richmond Hill, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Nicolae Tudose & Nicoleta Florea.

Serbanescu, Teodor and Marieta Murgoci, Montreal, PQ. St. Nicholas, Montreal, PQ. Godparents: Victor & Lia Cristinariu.

Stancu, Sorin and Marieta I. Costea, Detroit, MI. Dormition Monastery, Rives Junction, MI. Godparents: Mircea & Adriana Munte.

Voiculescu, Cristian and Letuyet Dang, Vancouver, WA. St. Mary, Portland, OR. Godparents: Adrian & Maria Dinu.

DECEASED

Capatina, Ioana, 49. St. George, Toronto, ON.

Delnea, Nickolia "Nick," 63. St. George, Regina, SK.

Golimbioski, Elena, 88. St. George, Regina, SK.

Pentlichuk, George, 88. St. Elias, Lennard, MB.

Yankuts, Mary, 80. Sts. Peter & Paul, Dearborn Hts., MI.

ST. MARY FEAST DAY CELEBRATION & 3RD ANNUAL PICNIC

Vatra Românească, Grass Lake, Michigan

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1997

10:30 a.m.	Hierarchal Divine Liturgy
12:30 p.m.	Mititei & picnic style foods available all day for purchase
1:00-3:00 p.m.	Cultural Program featuring: Cerbul Carpatin Dance Ensemble of Brasov, Romania Tărănuța Dance Ensemble of Detroit, Michigan
4:00-9:00 p.m.	Dance to the music of VALAHIA of Chicago, Illinois

Admission at the Gate

\$6.00 — Adults, \$2.00 — Children under 12

FINANCIAL REPORT

EPISCOPATE SUPPORTERS

M/M Dan N. Calin, Chicago, IL	\$50.00
M/M Chuck Nanas, Livonia, MI	\$25.00
M/M William B. Monroe, Brooklyn, OH	\$25.00
V. Rev. Fr. Constantin Tofan, Canton, OH	\$25.00
Eleonora Fytikas, Toronto, ON	\$17.38
M/M Victor Mangu, Van Nuys, CA	\$10.00
Ilie Racoveanu, Garden Grove, CA	\$10.00

GENERAL DONATIONS

M/M Stefan Mitescu, Montreal, PQ	\$69.50
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MEMORIAMs

Margareta Bulumete, Pembroke Pines, FL	\$200.00
(IMO George Bulumete)	
M/M Andrew Gib, Ellwood City, PA	\$20.00
(IMO Nasu Nicolae Savu)	

EPISCOPATE DUES

St. Nicholas, Alliance, OH	\$1,170.00
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BISHOP'S TRAVEL (VISITATION)

St. Nicholas, Troy, MI	\$200.00
St. John, Kitchener, ON	\$173.75

MISSION FUND

St. Mary Ladies Auxiliary, St. Paul, MN	\$500.00
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MISSION APPEAL

M/M John C. Tilea, Youngstown, OH	\$100.00
V. Rev. Fr. & Ps. Richard Grabowski,	
Warren, OH	\$50.00
Cristiana M. Boieru MD, Cleveland, OH	\$50.00
Dorothy G. Durato, Chesterfield, MO	\$50.00
M/M John Streza, Canton, OH	\$50.00
M/M Thomas P. Andrews, N. Olmsted, OH	\$25.00
Silivia Calustian, Glendale, CA	\$25.00
Nicolae Filipescu, Birmingham, MI	\$25.00
M/M Toma Goncerenco, San Jose, CA	\$25.00
V. Rev. Fr. & Ps. Vasile Hategan,	
Lakewood, OH	\$25.00
Adrian I. Herlea, Houston, TX	\$25.00
M/M Ilie Negru, Portland, OR	\$25.00
M/M George Pascut, Seattle, WA	\$25.00
M/M Aurel Vlaicu, Palm Springs, CA	\$25.00
M/M Donald L. Zelle, St. Louis, MO	\$25.00
Psa. Victoria Moldovan, New Wilmington, PA	\$15.00
M/M Jean Orza, Las Vegas, NV	\$10.00
M/M George L. Cipu, Trumbull, CT	\$2.00

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VATRA

Nasea Family of Detroit, MI	\$60.00
(IMO Ioan & Paraschiva and sister, Rebecca)	
Podar Family of Niles, OH	\$60.00
(IMO Nicolae & Elena, parents; Stella P. Flesher, sister)	
Dorina Riscutta, N. Olmsted, OH	\$60.00

NURSES STATION BUILDING FUND

Holy Cross, Hermitage, PA	\$2,000.00
Credinta Ladies Auxiliary, Chicago, IL	\$300.00

CORRECTION

On page 14 of the June 1997 issue, the name of M/M George Dascalu was misspelled. Sincere apologies!

HIERARCHAL SCHEDULE

June 18-19. Wednesday-Thursday. Washington DC. CORA meetings at White House with Presidential staff concerning NATO admittance of Romania. Meetings at Romanian Embassy with staff. Dinner honor of visit of Prime Minister Victor Ciorbea.

June 22. Sunday. Troy, MI. St. Nicholas. Divine Liturgy. Ground-breaking and blessing of new church project. Banquet.

June 29. Sunday. Dearborn Hts., MI. Sts. Peter & Paul. Hram celebration. Divine Liturgy. Festival Banquet. Program.

July 3-6. Thursday-Sunday. Vatra. Grass Lake, MI. Annual Episcopate Church Congress. Presiding Officer. ✱

SOLIA

June 18 - July 9, 1997

We gratefully acknowledge the following donations and subscriptions:

FRIENDS

Dr. Cristiana Boieru, Cleveland, OH	\$100.00
I.M.O. Father, George Boieru	
Chirila Ciuntu, Windsor, ON	\$15.00
M/M Dan Chirtu, Richmond Hill, ON	\$15.00
Terry Holovach, Regina, SK	\$13.00
Nick Roman, Hobart, IN	\$12.00
Georgeta Dumitrescu, North Hollywood, CA	\$7.00

SUBSCRIPTIONS

John Szeerba, Harrisburg, PA
Andreia Sissel, Austin, MN
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Sylvia Sanders, Gaylord, MI
Helen A. Lewis, Johnson City, NY
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Eugenia Horton, Antioch, CA
Maria Finley, Sacramento, CA
Tiberiu Dianu, Washington, DC
M/M Paul Hildreth, Burton, MI
David Fritz, Wilkes-Barre, PA
Dr. Oana Hinely, Silver Spring, MD
Eleanor Kolberg, Huntington Woods, MI
State Historical Society, Madison, WI
Karen Koertge, Wheaton, IL
Mary Popa, Omaha, NE
Rev. Fr. Ioan Ionita, Munster, IN
Valerie Oana, Lachine, PQ
Zuzana Tudoroiu, Don Mills, ON

“RUGAȚI-VĂ NEÎNCETAT ...”

(1 TES. 5:17)

Precum pâinea este hrana trupului și virtutea hrana sufletului, așa rugăciunea este hrana minții.

Nouă celor din veacul de acum aceste cuvinte ne gârie auzul. Argumentăm repede că ne lipsește timpul și astfel devenim idolatri. Timpul zilei este în serviciul nostru, iar nu noi suntem sclavii timpului. Trebuie să facem în așa fel ca rugăciunea să ne ritmeze viața, fără ca să simțim vreodată oboseala. Rugăciunea trebuie să ne fie un însoțitor permanent în viață, să devină o necesitate. Orice suflet care iubește pe Domnul nu poate să nu se roage, aceasta ținându-ne în dragostea lui Dumnezeu. Chiar sfinții îngeri ne îndeamnă la rugăciune și stau de față împreună cu noi. Aceștia îl laudă neîncetat pe Dumnezeu și pun rugăciunile noastre înaintea feței Domnului.

Bisericiile ne sunt date pentru rugăciune, iar în biserici slujbele se săvârșesc după cărțile de slujbă. Nu poți lăsa biserica cu tine și nu poți avea totdeauna cu tine cărțile de slujbă. Rugăciunea inimii este însă cu puțință în tot locul și în toată vremea. Ea este acea “rugăciune de foc” pe care o cunoștea Sf. Cassian, fără cuvinte, se întrece înțelegerea noastră și care urcă la Dumnezeu prin revărsarea luminii cerești în inimă.

Această rugăciune, deși ca stih este scurtă — “Doamne Iisuse Hristoase Fiul lui Dumnezeu, miluiește-ne!” — ni s’a predat de către Sfinții Părinți, nu fără o precotîntă sau fără o chibzuială prealabilă. Sf. Apostol Pavel spune că “... Duhul vine în ajutor slăbiciunii noastre, căci noi nu știm să ne rugăm cum trebuie, ci însuși Duhul se roagă pentru noi cu suspine negrăite” (Rom. 8:26). Uneori El strigă “Avva Părinte,” exprimând astfel înfierea pe care o avem prin Fiul. Alteori dumnezeiescul Mângâietor ne mângâie în suspine negrăite prin “scâncete de prunc” în inimile noastre. Dar alteori, ne încălzește sufletele cu suspin de iubire, prin lucrări tainice de Fiul față de Tatăl Domnului nostru Iisus Hristos.

Aceste lucrări ale Duhului Sfânt le-au încercat Sfinții Părinți, oștiri întregi de monahi și isihaști prin rugăciunea inimii. Sfântul Ignatie Teoforul a simțit în inima sa dragostea dumnezeiască și a zis: “Nu este în mine foc iubitor de materie, ci o apă care țâșnește spunându-mi: “vino la Tatăl.”

Pentru ca rugăciunea neîncetată să devină curată, spune Sf. Apostol Pavel, ea trebuie săvârșită “fără mânie și fără gânduri,” (1 Tim. 2:8). Foarte bine spune că orice gând separă mintea de Dumnezeu, chiar dacă acesta pare bun. La fel și Evagrie consideră ca condiție preliminară a rugăciunii înstrăinarea minții de toate gândurile, ca sufletul să atingă totul. “Stai cu

încordare și te roagă cu osârdie și ocolește grijile și gândurile, căci ele te tulbură și te neliniștesc, ca să te scoată din tăria rugăciunii” (Evagrie Ponticul, Filocalia Rom. Vol. 1, p. 93).

Toată lupta celui rău este de a separa și de a întoarce mintea dela Dumnezeu spre grijile lumești. Atunci când el vede râvna noastră la rugăciune, ne strecoară gândurile unor lucruri care nouă ni se par de trebuință. Separarea de rugăciune este socotită drept moartea cea mai rea, căci sufletul, nemișcându-se prin rugăciune, moare și devine jalnic, rău mirositor.

Cu toată tăria, mintea trebuie ținută în frâu pentru a se îndepărta dela orice gând și lucrare a celui rău. Dacă totuși se întâmplă ca mintea să fie răpită, ea nu trebuie să persiste în aceste gânduri care pot duce la atacurile prin închipuire. Aceasta este o separație între mintea curată și realitatea înțeleasă. Ea împiedică mintea dela privirea ei curată, care se extinde la Dumnezeu. Sf. Maxim Mărturisitorul numește “solzi” impresiile vederilor sensibile sau formele pe care le-a adunat imaginația. Putem spune chiar că imaginația fluctuează atât după calitatea morală a vieții, cât și după genul de viață dus de om.

Un comentariu ascetic al rugăciunii lui Iisus ne îndeamnă: “să nu separați inimile voastre de Dumnezeu, ci stăruți și păziți-o pe ea cu pomenirea Domnului nostru pururea, până când numele Său se va sădi în inimă și nimic altceva nu gândiți, decât să se slăvească Hristos în voi. Vă îndemn deci să nu încetați acest canon al rugăciunii, fie că mâncați, fie că beți, fie că mergeți pe drum, fie că orice altceva faceți, neîncetat strigați: “Doamne, Iisuse Hristoase, Fiul lui Dumnezeu, miluiește-ne!” (Dialoguri la Athos, Teoklit Dionisiatul, vol. 2, p. 189).

Beneficiile acestei rugăciuni vor urma. Deși nevrednici, de vor veni, să le primim cu smerenie. Prin rugăciune dobândim smerenia, răbdarea și tot lucrul bun. Ele se pot pierde și muri prin judecăți, vorbe deșarte și neînfrânare. Noi cunoaștem însă legea vieții duhovnicești: darurile sunt date dela Dumnezeu doar sufletului smerit, ascultător și înfrânat în toate — hrană, cuvinte și mișcări. Domnul însuși îi va da rugăciunea și ea se va săvârși cu ușurință în inima lui.

Cei mai important scop al vieții noastre este despățimirea și unirea cu Dumnezeu. Dacă omul este rob al patimii, sufletul lui este întunecat și nu poate lumina și zidi pe alții. Mai întâi trebuie să ne curățim pe noi înșine iar apoi să luminăm și să vindecăm pe alții. Să ne silim să devenim oameni duhovnicești, deprinzându-ne cu nevoia trupească, dar mai ales cu cea a minții, deci să ne rugăm.

Nu trebuie să considerăm că rugăciunea, postul și privegherile sunt destinate numai monahilor. Conștiința ne îndeamnă să afirmăm că natura Bisericii noastre este ascetică. Fără trăirea unei vieți interioare, Ortodoxia nu ar fi decât o filosofie. ✱

Arhim. Roman Braga

CONGRESUL 1997 IN IMAGINI



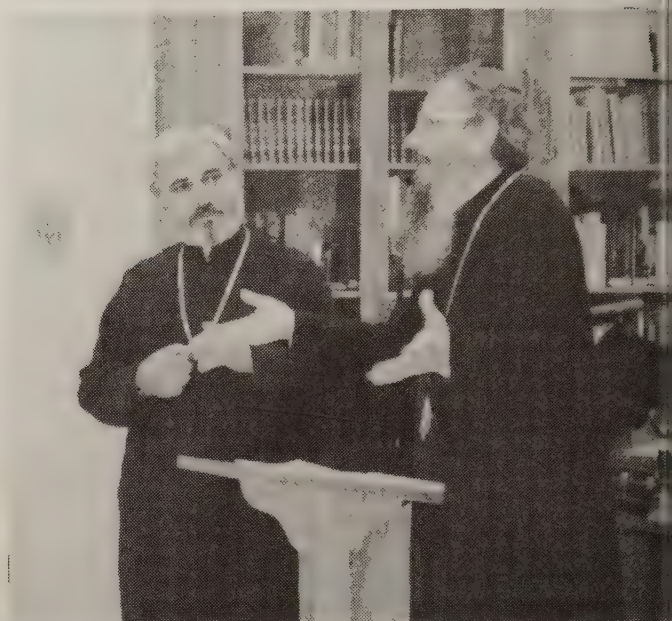
Sărutul păcii — în Sf. Altar al Capelei "Sf. Maria" — Vatra.



Te Deum pentru ziua de 4 Iulie.



Doamnele de la parohia - gazdă, "Sf. Maria" — Chicago, pregătind bucate minunate pentru participanții la Congres.



I.P.S. Serafim se adresează clerului Episcopiei și
Pr. Prot. Const. Alece — interpret.



Pr. Prot. Anton Frunză (România) vorbește la
Banchetul de Duminică, despre hirotonirea fiului
său, Florin Anton Frunză pe seama Bis. "Sf. Treime"
Los Angeles, CA.



ARFORA — Chioșcul cu cafea și dulciuri —
Doamnele de la Catedrala "Sf. Gheorghe."
Southfield, Michigan.



"Corală Preoților" dirijată de Pr. Traian Petrescu (New York) a încântat audiența, interpretând cântece îndrăgite.



Tineretul AROY din Chicago, IL și Michigan.

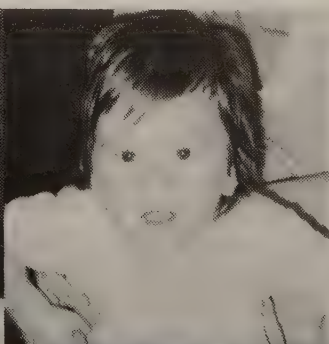
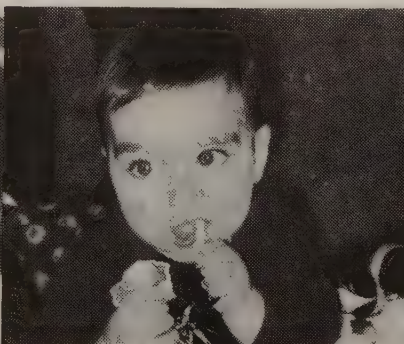


Hai la horă!



Doamnele de la parohia "Sf. Maria" — Chicago.

NOUA GENERAȚIE



ANIVERSAREA A 30 DE ANI A PAROHIEI “SF. IOAN BOTEZĂTORUL” DIN KITCHENER, ONTARIO, CANADA

Pe 14-15 Iunie a.c.a. a avut loc în Kitchener, sărbătorirea aniversării a 30 de ani de la înființarea parohiei Ortodoxe române “Sf. Ioan Botezătorul.”

Sâmbătă la Vecernia Mare a slujit P.S. Episcop NATHANIEL înconjurat de un sobor de preoți care au slujit și la liturgia arhierască de a doua zi: Pr. Protopop Nicolae Marioncu, Pr. Protopop Nicolae Zelea, Pr. Ioan Bunea (Toronto), Pr. Dumitru Păun (London), Diacon Ioan Cudrițescu (Toronto), ajutați de ipodiamonii Radu Emanuel Chiriac și Thomas Emanuel Ichim și, evident, preotul parohiei noastre, Păr. Dumitru Ichim.

Slujbele au fost cutremurător de impresionate, coincidența făcând ca evenimentul sărbătorii să coincidă cu Duminica Pogorîrii Sfântului Duh. Biserica s'a dovedit a fi neîncăpătoare și doar impresionanta procesiune de înconjurare a ei a permis celor 350-400 de persoane să participe activ la solemnitatea rugăciunilor.

A urmat apoi banchetul aniversar, în sala “Centrului Cultural Românesc.” La masa de onoare, Episcopul, preoții, preotesele, președinții parohiei cu soțiile și alți distinși oaspeți. Maestru de ceremonii a fost Avram Sârbu, actualul președinte al parohiei, care a coordonat festivitățile. Dintre vorbitori menționăm pe Păr. Zelea, care a vorbit despre începuturile parohiei, el și cu Păr. Tănase fiind cei care au tras prima brazdă de ortodoxie românească în Kitchener.

Dintre mireni, pe lângă alții, ne-a impresionat salutul primului președinte, atât de tineresc la vârsta în jurul

a 80 de ani. E vorba de Ion Călvărășan: “Este o adevărată onoare și o bucurie a fi aici astăzi să celebrăm cu Dstră a 30-a aniversare a parohiei Bisericii Sf. Ioan Botezătorul. Permiteți-mi, în primul rând, să vă mulțumesc pentru recunoașterea activității mele. Un om care poate să contribuie comunității cu ceva o va dura peste timp este un om cu adevărat realizat. Faptul că am putut servi comunitatea românească în urmă cu atâția ani, ca întâiul președinte al bisericii, fost o onoare și un privilegiu. Trebuie să subliniez că eforturile mele au dat roade datorită eforturilor, dăruirii, entuziasmului și a sacrificiilor făcute de toți membrii fără de care nu am avea astăzi o parohie.”

Într'un cadru solemn a urmat decernarea de plăci certificate de aniversare, fiecărui președinte al parohiei de acum 30 de ani și până astăzi: Ion Călvărășan, Andrei Kârnician, Achim Țârnea, Dr. Ion Radu, Ion Liviu Cănanău, Pavel Filip, George Barbu, Avram Sârbu, Ionică Popescu.

Înainte ca ultimul vorbitor să ia cuvântul, care într-o parohie nu poate fi decât Episcopul, din sala reprezentantele Reuniunii Doamenilor, au venit cu o surpriză. Era ziua de naștere a Prea Sfințitului Nathaniel. Toată sala s'a ridicat în picioare să cânte “La mulți ani” și “Happy birthday to you.”

În continuare echipele folklorice ale “Societății Culturale Române Banatul” au prezentat un admirabil program artistic. ❀

Correspondent: Avram Sârbu



DESPRE EUTANASIE

Îndepărtata Australie deține, de câțva timp, un record nistru, care a cutremurat întreaga lume: în teritoriul de Nord a intrat în vigoare prima lege care autorizează eutanasia la bolnavii terminali. Sau, mai corect: omucidere, asistată nu neapărat de un medic, ci de un computer.

Spre deosebire de legislația Olandei și a celei a statului Oregon (aceasta din urmă, neintrată în vigoare), care se limitau să depenalizeze eutanasia, cea australiană este prima care legalizează sinuciderea asistată, adică dreptul oricărui bolnav terminal de a se da la moarte, beneficiind de asistență medicală. De această lege poate beneficia orice cetățean australian care locuiește în prezent și se află în trecere prin Teritoriul de Nord.

Încă din prima zi, s'au anunțat șase bolnavi, solicitând "beneficiile" acestei legi. Totuși, aplicarea ei s'a lovit de o furtună de critici de natură legală, religioasă, politică, din partea bisericilor, a asociațiilor religioase pro vita, a asociațiilor medicilor ș.a. Astfel și medicii, care ar fi fost dispuși să aplice acest tratament, se tem încă de imputația de omucid. Însă și primele aplicative ale legii sunt greu de respectat. Trăgerea de eutanasia trebuie aprobată de un grup de trei medici, dintre care unul să fie psihiatru, iar altul un specialist în boala de care suferă bolnavul; aceștia trebuie să declare că bolnavul este incurabil. Cum în Northern Territory are puțini specialiști și nici un psiholog, legea e inaplicabilă.

Între metodele propuse, există și un sistem computerizat. Pacientul e așezat în fața unui "videoterminal" anonim cu care este angajat într'un dialog: "Dacă apeși butonul 'Yes,' primești o injecție letală și vei muri în 30 de secunde. Accepți?" Dacă răspunsul e afirmativ, "doctorul Moarte," prin intermediul unui braț de fier, injectează o soluție letală, în două faze întâi, un barbituric, care adoarme bolnavul, apoi un relaxant muscular, care-l ucide prin asfixie. În ultima procedură constă în eliberarea unui certificat de deces, în care cauza morții este indicată: *eutanasia*.

Opinia publică mondială s'a declarat în total dezacord cu această lege. *American Medical Association*, la deschiderea congresului anual, s'a exprimat, prin vot majoritar, împotriva sinuciderii asistate. *Associazione Medici e Infermieri Italia* consideră practica eutanasică nu doar imorală, ci și o ofensă și o contradicție la profesiunea medicală. Alții o consideră semnul "celui mai scăzut nivel al orizontului cultural al timpului nostru," datorat unei "concepții politico-filosofice tot mai difuze: aceea a negării teoriei sacralității vieții."

În ultimii ani, în mediile de gândire utilitaristă — influențată de cultura anglo-saxonă — se afirmă tot mai mult că viața are valoare (adică merită să fie trăită) doar în măsura în care poate fi coordonată în

condiții de autonomie totală, fără limite de nici un fel (inclusiv durerea), care ar condiționa-o. Pentru o asemenea concepție asupra vieții, eutanasia e ușor de acceptat: e, într-un fel, "*sfârșitul anticipat și ne-natural al vieții, provocat de alții sau de sine însuși, pentru a evita suferințele în stadii de boală ireversibile și în faze terminale, sau pentru a pune capăt unei vieți neproductive din punct de vedere intelectual și social*." Într-o astfel de comprehensiune a eutanasiilor, între "candidații la moarte" sunt așezați și cei aflați în comă ireversibilă, malformații fără speranța de ameliorare, cei suferinzi de boala Alzheimer în fază avansată etc.

Unei asemenea provocări, cine trebuie să răspundă? Toți. Creștinii în primul rând. Dar și toți aceia care se simt oameni. E vorba de o responsabilitate comună care angajează. În fața acestui atentat la adresa vieții, cu o mască de legalitate și cu implicații multiple, la diverse nivele, competența revine bioeticii.

Învățătura creștină ortodoxă este cea care oferă suportul axiologic întru apărarea vieții, fundament pe care nici doctrinele filozofice nu-l au, dar nici alte doctrine religioase, fie ele și creștine. E îndeobște cunoscut că, pentru creștini, viața este un dar creatural, restaurat și dăruit de Hristos prin moarte și Înviere. O viață, omorâtă în imperfecțiunea ei datorată păcatului, și înviată spre veșnicie. În aceasta constă suportul axiologic în apărarea vieții, ca dar divin dăruit de Dumnezeu — Singurul care poate dispune de viața omului. E drept, viața pământească nu-i valoarea supremă, nu-i un scop în sine: prin ea, urmărim să dobândim pe cea veșnică. Dar între viața pământească și cea veșnică există continuitatea realizată de harul divin necreat, care face ca cea de-a doua să se reverse peste cea dintâi, sfințind-o, transfigurând-o. Acest adevăr de credință e afirmat cu claritate în Ortodoxie, fapt pentru care numai aceasta din urmă oferă adevăratul suport al vieții.

Ce să mai zicem de ceea ce, în literatura de specialitate, este cunoscut sub numele de "*dezumanizarea medicinei*"?! Pentru medicină, eutanasia este negarea propriei identități și misiuni. Cu cât mai inumană s'ar arăta medicina care ar acredita această practică oribilă ce ar oferi muribundului — drept ultimă mângâiere — dialogul nu cu o persoană, ci cu un ... computer! Din fericire, cazul prezentat de noi este considerat de medicii înșiși o anomalie, o aberație. Și totuși, această "excepție" a primit credit legal din partea unui parlament!

Încercând să releve latura umană a medicinei și caracterul special al acesteia pentru bolnavii terminali. Dr. Giovanni Creton, președintele Asociației *Ryder Italia* observa: "De mai bine de zece ani, acordăm asistență bolnavilor terminali: am urmărit până în jur de 1500 de persoane. Și vă asigur că nici unul n-a vrut vreodată să moară ... Persoanele în vârstă (și nu neapărat sărace), doar pentru că sunt singure își doresc să moară."

Cont. la pag. 23

DOUĂ PILDE DESPRE TATĂ

O Pildă Negativă

“Mamă dragă” — zise un copil de patru ani către mama lui — “așa-i că după ce voi fi mare nu trebuie să mai zic rugăciunile?”

“Ba trebuie, dragul mamei, căci toți oameni cei buni se roagă. Numai oamenii cei răi nu se roagă.”

“D’apoi atunci tăticul de ce-i bun și nu se roagă?”

Această pildă aduce zâmbet pe buze, dar în același timp și o amărăciune în suflet. Zâmbetul vine din situația creată de inocența copilului, care pornind de la o premiză falsă ajunge la o concluzie eronată deși logică. Iar tristețea vine din faptul că copilul are o dorință aprinsă de a învăța, și este supus unui exemplu negativ. Exemplul negativ nu-i este oferit de un oarecare, ci de cel ce mai important model — exemplu pe care un copil poate să-l aibe în viață — tatăl lui.

Două lucruri ar trebui subliniate. Mai întâi trebuie să înțelegem faptul că un copil învață mai înainte de toate după un model, după exemplu. Copilului nu putem să-i spunem să facă una iar noi, părinții lui, să facem altceva, chiar opusul.

În al doilea rând, un copil nu acceptă demagogia. De aceea nu putem să mințim un copil. Copilului nu-i putem spune nu minți, iar noi mințim ... nu fura iar noi furăm ... Dacă noi mințim și el o să mintă, etc. Ochii copilului sunt ca niște oglinzi, iar sufletul lui ca o ceară neformată. Ei se uită mai ales la părinți, care le sunt primele modele.

Ce trist este deci că atunci când ajung la a învăța copilul din cele ale lui Dumnezeu, de multe ori părinții nu înțeleg rolul lor de exemple vii și nu iau acest lucru în serios.

În educația creștină a copiilor, școala duminicală de la Bisericile noastre este importantă. Dar și mai mult, atitudinea părinților față de Biserică și față de școala de duminică este crucială.

Sunt părinți care în mod obișnuit întârzie la Biserică ... Copilul știe că pentru lucruri importante cineva trebuie să fie la timp, ca de exemplu, la școala publică, la medic, etc. Obișnuința de a veni cu întârziere la Biserică sau la școala duminicală învață pe copil că Dumnezeu nu este tot atât de important cum este școala publică sau lecțiile de pian, pentru care trebuie să fie la timp.

Alt exemplu este atitudinea părinților față de frecventarea Bisericii. Nu le trebuie mult unor părinți să nu vină la Biserică duminică: numai un pic de ploaie, sau prea mult soare. Orice poate să constituie o scuză de a nu veni la Biserică. Părinții niciodată nu stau acasă de la lucru luna dimineața din cauza unei ploii. Astfel în mintea copilului se face legătura că este mult mai important serviciul decât Dumnezeu.

Din acest motiv, aproape totul este mai important

decât Dumnezeu. Mai este oare de mirare că atunci când copilul crește mare va adopta un sistem de valori din care lasă afară pe Dumnezeu și va duce un mod de viață lipsit de prezența lui Dumnezeu? Aceștia se pot identifica cu ceea ce Abbie Hoffman a spus cândva: “Dumnezeu este mort (în sufletele lor), și vina este noastră.”

Punctualitatea și participarea cu credincioșenie la Biserică impresionează asupra copiilor măreția lui Dumnezeu și superioritatea sistemului de valori creștin ortodoxe. Mai trebuie să spunem oare cât de important este să avem pe Dumnezeu în sufletele noastre și cât de necesară este urmarea lui Hristos și a valorilor Lui pentru mântuirea sufletelor noastre? Desigur că nu, știm acestea. Dar atunci, ne întrebăm, ce părinte oare vrea ca să piardă sufletul propriului lui copil? Niciunul ... în mod intenționat. Dar, să nu uităm că aceasta se poate face și din neglijență sau lene.

Nu, Dacă Este Ca Și Tine, Tată!

Un credincios adevărat a avut un copil care s-a îmbolnăvit grav. După o serie de teste, doctorul a venit cu verdictul cutremurător: boala copilului era gravă. Tatăl s-a rugat cu copilul, apoi cu lacrimi în ochi i-a spus copilului verdictul medicului. I-a spus copilului că mai are doar puțin timp în viața aceasta: “Îți este frică ca să-L întâlnești pe Iisus Domnul copilul meu?” I-a întrebat devotatul tată.

După câteva lacrimi, copilul a spus cu curaj: “Nu, nu dacă este ca și tine, tată!”

Această pildă este plină de duioșie. Rolul de model al tatălui pentru copil este exprimat în mod direct și atât de real într-o situație extremă.

Cont. la pag. 2.

HARAMUL BISERICA “SFÂNTA MARIA” SFÂNTA LITURGHIE URMATĂ DE PICNIC

Vatra Românească, Grass Lake, MI

Sâmbătă, 6 Septembrie 1997

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 10:30 a.m. | Sfântă Liturghie Arhierească |
| 12:30 p.m. | Mititei și Mâncare Tip Picnic va fi din Vândare în Tot Cursul Zilei |
| 1:00-3:00 p.m. | Program Cultural Ansamblul Dansurilor Românești: “Cerbul Carpatin”
Din Brașov, Romania
“Țărăncuța” Din Zona Metropolitană Detroit, MI |
| 4:00-9:00 p.m. | Dans Orchestra “Valahia”
Din Chicago, IL. |

Băuturi Răcoritoare Vor Fi De Vândare

Taxa de Participare va fi Încasată la Poartă:

\$6.00 — Pentru Adulții

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VEȘTI DIN CHIȘINĂU

La 24 Iunie am primit o scrisoare, cu data de 28 Mai 1997, dela Înalt Prea Sfințitul Mitropolit PETRU din Republica Moldova.

Scrisoarea spune, între altele, "Prea Cucernice Părinte, u mulțumire și recunoștință, Vă trimitem alăturat, aportul de distribuire al semințelor de porumb, donate de Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America de Nord. ... Cu prețuire și arhierească binecuvântare pentru toți Românii din Statele Unite, (semnează) +PETRU — Arhiepiscop al Chișinăului, Mitropolit al Basarabiei și Exarh al Plaiurilor."

La scrisoare au fost atașate listele cu numele beneficiarilor care au beneficiat de ajutorul umanitar de semințe de porumb, cu numele preoților, prin intermediul cărora s'a făcut distribuirea și numele persoanelor care au primit semințele. Este vorba de sute de tone de semințe de porumb, trimise de Episcopie prin Help for Romania, la sfârșitul anului trecut, sosite prin portul Odesa în iarnă, iar distribuirea s'a făcut între 19 Februarie și 26 Mai 1997.

Pe lângă aceste liste, Înalt Prea Sfințitul Mitropolit PETRU, mi-a mai trimis o foaie din ziarul ȚARA — publicație a Frontului Popular Creștin Democrat din Republica Moldova, cu Nr. 32 din 22 Aprilie 1997. Pe pagina întâia a acestei publicații, apare într'un chenar special următoarea știre: Noi, țăraniimproprietării din Condrățești, Ungheni, aducem sincere mulțumiri Mitropoliei Basarabiei și Cartelului Țărănesc "Sfântul Gheorghe," care ne-au ajutat creștinește cu semințe de porumb, pentru semănatul de primăvară. Semnătura este: Vasile BODRUG, Mihail CĂLUGAREANU, Alexandru BORȘ, Vasile STATI, în total 27 de țărani.

Ne bucurăm să auzim că ajutoarele trimise de Episcopie au ajuns cu bine și au fost împărțite. Rugăm pe Dumnezeu să ajute fraților din Basarabia să aibă o recoltă bună. Mulțumim donatorilor și I.P.Sf. Mitropolit PETRU, pentru osteneala de a face distribuirea. ✽

**Părintele Richard J. Grabowski
HELP FOR ROMANIA**

Despre Eutanasi

Cont. de la pag. 21

Așadar, unde eutanasi e dorită, acolo lipsește de mult duhul viețuirii creștine, prietenia și orice urmă de umanitate. Iar când ea dobândește și un cadru de egalitate, devine proba nu doar a secularizării conștiinței, dar și a dezumanizării acesteia. ✽

Ierom. Iuvenalie IONAȘCU

(Din rev. "Lumina Lină," nr. 2, 1997
a Episcopiei Argeșului și Muscelului)

POMENIREA CELUI DINTRE SFINȚI, PĂRINTELE NOSTRU ALEXANDRU, PATRIARHUL CONSTANTINOPOLULUI (+340)

Sfântul Alexandru a fost episcop pe vremea marelui împărat Constantin (313-337) și a Sfântului Mitrofan, întâiul patriarh al Constantinopolului. Și era Sfântul Alexandru bărbat cu multă râvnă, și împodobit cu o minunată înțelepciune și cu fapte bune. Când s'au adunat la Niceea Sfinții Părinți, la cel dintâi Sinod al toată lumea (325), patriarhul Mitrofan, neputând merge, din pricina bătrânețelor, pe acest Sfânt Alexandru l-a trimis în locul lui, ca mărturisitor al dreptei credințe. Și a dovedit acolo multă pricepere împotriva rătăcitei învățăături a lui Arie, încât, de mult folos au fost îndrumările date de el pentru statornicia adevărilor drepte credințe.

Iar când, după moartea Sfântului Mitrofan, Sfântul Alexandru a fost înălțat patriarh al Constantinopolului, el a păstorit cu părintească grijă turma lui Hristos, ce i-a fost încredințată, fiind un bun și neadormit păstor, împotriva lupilor eretici și păgâni și chiar împăratului din vremea sa, Constanțiu, fiul marelui Constantin, care se lăsase înșelat de uneltirile părtașilor lui Arie. Și așa, după o lungă viață de lupte și râvnă, pentru apărarea credinței, când anii săi au ajuns la 88, Sfântul Alexandru s'a mutat, cu pace, către Domnul. ✽

Două Pilde Despre Tată

Cont. de la pag. 22

Copiii de cele mai multe ori văd pe Dumnezeu și cele sfinte prin părinții lor. Părinții sunt de fapt primii "dumnezei" ai copilului. Un copil (și noi toți, căci toți am fost copii) nu poate să numescă fără grosime de umbră pe Dumnezeu Tată, dacă tatăl lui pământesc nu a fost un tată cu o influență pozitivă în viața lui. Dumnezeu Tată nu este un tată vitreg sau surogat pentru copil, ci o extensiune a tatălui fizic. Iar Maica Domnului, Maica tuturor, este icoana ce-i reamintește propria mamă. ✽

Pr. Cornel Todeasa

ÎNVĂȚĂTURĂ A SFÂNTULUI VASILE DESPRE INVIDIE

Să fugim, fraților, de invidie, de cursa cea drăcească, ca nu cumva legându-ne de răutatea păcatului, să cădem în osânda cea amară. Pentru că Domnul se împotrivește celor mândri, iar celor smeriți le dă dar. Deci, unde este invidie și ceartă, acolo nu este cercetarea darului lui Dumnezeu, ci numai lucruri de defăimare și diavolești gânduri. Apoi, ce este mai ticălos decât invidia?

Invidiază leneșul agonisirea celui bogat, dar el nu se ostenește, că din osteneală vine agonisirea. Invidiază păcătosul curăția celui drept, dar nu voiește să se tragă pe sine însuși de la păcat. Invidiază desfrânatul întreaga înțelepciune a celui curat, dar nu voiește să se asemeni cu viața lui. Invidiază, pe cel dimpreună cu el, lucrătorul cel viclean, care a căpătat aceeași plată, ca și cei care au lucrat un singur ceas, și nu-și aduce aminte de Hristos, Care a zis: "Prietene, nu-ți fac ție strâmbătate, nu cu un dinar te-ai tocmnit cu mine? Ia-ți al tău și du-te, că vreau, și celui de pe urmă să-i dau, ca și ție. Oare, nu sunt Eu slobod, ca să fac ce vreau cu ale Mele? Chiar dacă ochiul tău este viclean, Eu însă sunt bun."

Drept aceea, nu pășiți cu mândrie și lăsați invidia. Pentru că invidia este întristarea inimii și stricăciunea sufletului, uscăciunea trupului, stricarea dragostei, vrajba față de toți, risipirea neamului, pierderea vieții, ce va să fie, și moștenirea gheenei. Deci, acestea auzindu-le, fraților, să nu ținem invidie, ci să petrecem în dragoste. ✱

(Din Proloage)



EPISCOPIA ORTODOXĂ ROMÂNĂ DIN GYULA - UNGARIA

Sfântul Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române preocupat de soluționarea unor probleme privind comunitățile ortodoxe române de peste hotare, a luat în examinare și situația parohiilor ortodoxe române din Ungaria.

Constatând necesitatea de a se asigura preoților parohiilor funcționarea canonică și o dependență de un Episcop, membru al Sfântului Sinod al Bisericii noastre, căruia să i se încredințeze păstoria lor până la alegerea unui Episcop titular, în ședința din 13-14 Februarie 1997 Sfântul Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române a hotărât:

— aprobă reactualizarea și punerea în aplicare hotărârilor Sfântului Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române din 12 - Iulie și 4 Octombrie 1950, privind organizarea și funcționarea **Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române cu sediul la Gyula-Ungaria**, ca răspuns la hotărârea Congresului național de la Gyula, 27 Martie 1946;

— până la alegerea chiriarhului titular al Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române din Gyula-Ungaria, se încredințează **Prea Sfințitului Episcop TIMOTEI al Aradului** responsabilitatea ca Episcop locțiitor cu toate prerogativele chiriarhale pentru Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din Gyula-Ungaria. ✱

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